

DATA SHEET

Form 10-306
(Oct. 1972)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Tennessee
COUNTY:	Sevier
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	JAN 1 1976

1. NAME

COMMON:	Ownby, John Cabin
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Same

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:			
(Great Smoky Mountains National Park) 3 miles south of Gatlinburg, Tenn.			
CITY OR TOWN:		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:	
Gatlinburg		2nd District of Tenn.	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Tennessee	47	Sevier	155

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. AGENCY

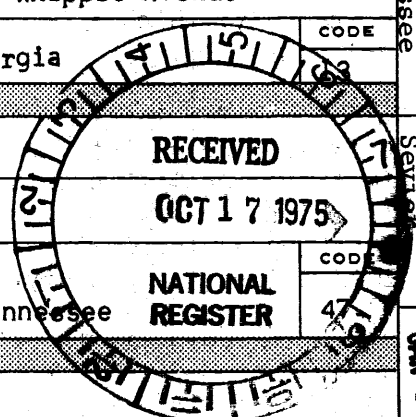
National Park Service, Department of Interior	
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)	STREET AND NUMBER:
Southeast Regional Office	3401 Whipple Avenue
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:
Atlanta	Georgia

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:	
Sevier County Courthouse	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:
Sevierville	Tennessee

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:	
None	
DATE OF SURVEY:	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:
	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:	Tennessee
COUNTY:	Sevier
ENTRY NUMBER	JAN 1 1976
DATE	

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Ownby, John--Cabin
Building #604
Recommened level of Treatment: Preservation
Cost Estimate: N/A

This is a rectangular building 19'6"x17'8". It is one story, with hewn, split log walls. The logs are white pine and poplar, some 25" in width. There is some rot present, but the logs are generally in good shape. The cracks between the logs are chinked in some cases and in others there are split board battens covering the openings. In a few instances vandals have removed both battens and mud from the wall cracks.

The corners of the building are dove-tail notched. They exhibit excellent workmanship in the notching, and many logs show both broad axe and adze marks. The gable ends of the cabin are split poplar and pine weather board.

There is a porch across the front of the building. It is 4' wide, and floored with sawn boards, random-width, over a hewn sill. There are two split poplar log steps leading from the ground to the porch. The porch is covered by a roof which butts into the wall six inches below the eaves of the roof of the house. The porch roof is shingled, and supported by four hardwood posts resting on the porch floor. The roof of the structure is gable, covered with split oak shingles.

Chimney: The chimney is located on the north end of the cabin. It is rubble masonry. The mortar is red clay from the nearby spring branch. It exhibits fine workmanship, and although the rest of the building has been repaired or rehabilitated over the years, little has been done to the chimney, which still appears much as it must have when it and the cabin were new.

Interior: The interior is one room, unceiled, with no loft or attic. The floor is random width, sawn board, with large cracks in places. Many of the boards exhibit considerable wear, especially in front of the doorways. The walls are hewn log, unpainted, with battens. The fireplace is in the north end of the cabin, and hearth, firebox, and chimney piece are all rubble limestone masonry.

Windows: There are two windows in the cabin. All sash and glass are missing. Both openings are rectangular in shape. One is in the south wall, and the other, a smaller opening, is in the north wall, on the east side of the fireplace.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

B. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>Distinctive</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | <u>Cultural Exhibit</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ownby, John Cabin--Order of Significance: 3rd

Prior to the establishment of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, there were over 25 families in what was called the Forks of the River community. In 1935 the area was included in the Park and the people moved away.

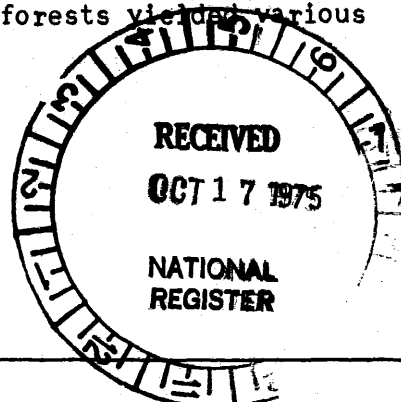
Today, the only building remaining in what was Forks of the River is the Ownby Cabin.

The Ownby family was one of the earliest to settle in the area of White Oak Flats, now Gatlinburg, Tennessee. The exact date of the family's arrival is uncertain but predates the Civil War. They along with a handful of other families settled the area in the mountain valleys along the forks of the Little Pigeon River.

One of the neighboring families of the Ownbys were the Regans. John H. Regan left the area for Texas, and later served as the Postmaster General of the Confederacy. It is somewhat ironic that a man originating in the mountains of East Tennessee should have held such high position in the Confederacy since the people of the region were loyal to the Union almost to a man.

The Forks of the River community grew over the years. A school, churches, and a store were added. Grist mills dotted the creek banks, and moonshine stills were located in the most inaccessible places.

People made their living by farming small fields of corn, beans, and vegetables. Cattle were herded in the high meadows or "balds" of the Smokies. There were small sawmills in connection with some of the grist mills, and chestnut bark was stripped and sold to tanneries. The woods and streams were hunted and fished, and the forests yielded various herbs and plants useful in many ways.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Campbell, John C., The Southern Highlander and His Home.
University of Kentucky Press: 1921.

Hall, Joseph H., Smoky Mountain Folks and Their Lore.
Cataloochee Press, Asheville: 1960.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"		
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"		
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"		
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"		

UTM Reference
17/269500 3952290

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Paul Gordon		DATE: 8/2/73
BUSINESS ADDRESS: Great Smoky Mountains National Park		
STREET AND NUMBER:		PHONE: (615) 436-5615
CITY OR TOWN: Gatlinburg	STATE: Tennessee	CODE

12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

State Liaison Officer recommendation:

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ None

Lauren Cherry
State Liaison Officer Signature

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby
nominate this property to the National Register, certifying
that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90
days in which to present the nomination to the State Review
Board and to evaluate its significance. The recommended
level of significance is ☐ National ☒ State

Robert A. Weber
Federal Representative Signature

Date

Deputy Assistant Secretary

Title

OCT 15 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the
National Register.

Vern L. Jones
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Date

Ronald M. Greenberg
Keeper of The National Register

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

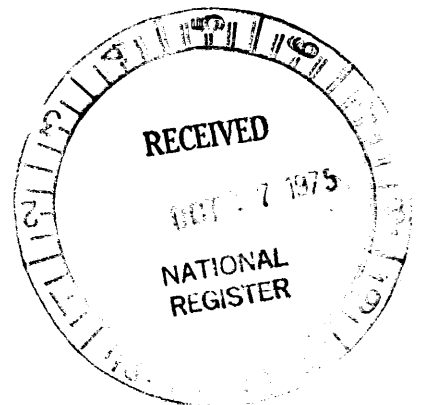
STATE Tennessee	
COUNTY Sevier	
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(Number all entries)

Item #7 cont'd (1)

Doors: There are two doorways into the cabin. Both are rectangular openings, 6'6"x3'. One is located in the east wall, and there is a stone serving as a step. The other in the west wall opens onto the porch. The doors are built of split boards with battens. Both are hung on butt hinges, and the west door has a manufactured lock and knob. The door on the east has no latch of any sort.

General Location: The cabin is located on the Sugarlands Nature Trail, in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Tennessee	
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(Number all entries) Item #8 cont'd (1)

The mountain communities were characterized by extreme isolation, and the consequences of this were seen in a certain amount of social stagnation and little exposure to or acceptance to change. However, the outside world crowded in on the mountain people, first by the logging industry cutting the timber from the mountains, and then the National Park movement resulting in a total disappearance of a number of communities.

Today the people of Forks of the River are gone, although many of them and their descendants still live in nearby communities. The fields have grown over and disappeared, and the fences, roads, and gates are gone. Of all the buildings that once made up the community only the John Ownby cabin remains, a reminder of a time and way of life gone by.

The cabin was originally built in 1860. Some 104 years later, in 1964, the structure was rehabilitated. Most original material was used, except the front porch which was deteriorated to the point where it had to be completely replaced. Care was taken to preserve the integrity of workmanship and architecture of the cabin.

